

VZCZCXRO4309  
PP RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHKH #0029/01 0120613  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 120613Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2665  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000029

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/11/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: TEARS, DEATH AND DANCING: THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE CPA AT MALAKAL

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Sudan's peace partners gathered in the city of Malakal, capital of Upper Nile state, to mark the fourth anniversary of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on January 9, 2009. The festivities were overshadowed by tribal fighting just outside Malakal's soccer stadium (where national and local dignitaries awaited the arrival of President Bashir and FVP Kiir) between Shilluk and Dinka tribesmen. In full view of the reviewing stand, at least 10 shots were fired causing hundreds of spectators and dancers to temporarily flee from the vicinity, racing across the grounds in terror. Initial press reports talked about two persons killed, while reports on January 12 speak of at least a dozen. The shooting was followed by tear gas several hundred yards away, the effects which were ultimately felt by the reviewing stand (which included CDA Fernandez and CG Juba personnel).

¶2. (SBU) The pink-robed Reth (King) of the Shilluk people was taken by the event's organizers to calm the crowd. Some accounts claim that the clash was due to long simmering land disputes between the two tribes, while others mentioned a rivalry over who would enter the stadium first. Not surprisingly, the violence delayed the arrival of the two main speakers by more than an hour and forced a shortened program leading to the cancellation of speeches by the UN, EU, US, Arab League, and African Union representatives.

¶3. (SBU) Once the heavily protected Bashir and Kiir arrived, they were swaddled with the traditional Shilluk dress dyed white as the color of peace. The formal festivities began with a prayer by the Catholic Bishop of Malakal, a reading from the Qur'an and a colorful parade of thousands demonstrating Sudan's incredible diversity. Units from the JIU - SPLA and SAF - were followed by Sudanese police, correctional officers, civil defense, and wildlife management teams. Then, dancing and marching, delegations from tribal associations, local counties, heritage groups, private schools and civil society passed by, including spear carrying Murle and Nuer, an groups of Darfuri IDPs brought in from Southern states. Almost all of these groups carried the banners and posters of the SPLM and not the flag of Sudan. One man walking on giant stilts was swathed from head to toe in the colors of the SPLM.

¶4. (SBU) First Vice President Salva Kiir spoke first, in English, and struck a tone of unity and conciliation. Referring to Bashir as "my brother, the President of the Republic," Kiir focused on the need to complete the undone work of the CPA, citing specifically border demarcation, continued progress on Abyei, the passage of new laws before the National Assembly guaranteeing basic freedoms and the 2011 referendum. He quoted Bashir as saying that even though he is for the unity of Sudan, Bashir and the NCP will respect the outcome of the 2011 vote, should the South decide to separate. Kiir mildly criticized the 2008 census, noting the

controversy about certain questions on ethnicity and religion being dropped, but strongly hinted that the SPLM was open to some sort of interim compromise on that key issue. Kiir's speech included perfunctory references to Darfur and to national elections but the overall tone was muted. He referred to his just concluded trip to Washington and warmly praised both President Bush and the United States for their role in bringing about the CPA.

15. (SBU) President Bashir also struck a sober, conciliatory tone, avoiding some of the fiery rhetoric and condescension he has sometimes used with Southern audiences. He urged national reconciliation, an early resolution of Darfur, and the urgent need for elections in 2009 (unlike Kiir who downplayed elections). He never once mentioned the looming issue of a possible ICC arrest warrant but focused on practical steps being taken to make unity attractive, solve Darfur, and fulfill the remaining provisions of the CPA. He announced the building of a section of the "unity road" linking the Southern border town of Renk, 72 KM north, with Malakal for the first time (earlier in the day he formally inaugurated projects in the city, including an electric power plant - making Malakal only the second or third city in the South with electricity - water plant and a branch of the Bank of Sudan) and freely admitted that there had been slowness and mistakes made in the full implementation of the accords.

16. (C) Skeptical SPLM observers were generally impressed with Bashir's remarks. SPLM Advisor Mansur Khalid told CDA Fernandez that Bashir's "humble and serious tone" was appealing, as was his clear commitment to see laws needed for elections passed quickly, such as the press and national

KHARTOUM 00000029 002 OF 002

security acts. Jonglei Governor Koul Manyang, a veteran SPLA commander, agreed, noting the positive nature of Bashir's comments which contrasted favorably with past patronizing finger-wagging by the President when he has ventured south. He did note that the flurry of projects inaugurated or announced for Upper Nile state may have more to do with the fact that it is the only Southern state with an NCP governor (a former Nuer army buddy of Bashir) and that it has oil than with making unity attractive, "what he is thinking is making the unity of Upper Nile with the North attractive."

17. (C) Comment: Compared to past celebrations of the CPA, this was far less of an exercise in mutual accusations of wrongdoing by the two parties. This is probably because with the ICC and a new American administration looming, the NCP is currently interested in a relatively smooth and positive relationship with the SPLM. The NCP's greatest fear is the creation of a perfect storm of crises and enemies joining together to sweep it from power, so it remains (in very relative terms) on its best behavior always knowing that it can return to its usual tactics of delay and deception when local and international conditions are more favorable. Bashir's enthusiasm for elections also hints at the NCP intending to use popular mobilization to legitimize its hold on power in Khartoum in 2009, in the wake of these challenges, and its understanding that the SPLM is somewhat uneasy about an electoral process it is not ready for, a process that will stress the eternal divide in the SPLM between unionists and separatists. End comment.

FERNANDEZ